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ABSTRACT

The Second Year Communication Skills Program (SYCSP) consists of instructional materials and procedures designed to improve the reading skills of first-grade children. The reading achievement of students was measured in 10 classrooms using the SYCSP. The Second Year Program Test, used to judge the effectiveness of the program, was administered to a random sample of children in each of the selected classes. This test measures performance on program words, word elements, and word attack skills. This test was individually administered by laboratory staff at the end of the 1970-71 school year. Form 12A of the Cooperative Primary Reading Test provided an additional measure of the children's reading skills. Scores on the SYCSP Test indicated that most of the children attained a large proportion of the reading skills taught during the school year. Data collected suggest that the SYCSP was highly effective as measured by the proportion of program outcomes mastered by most children. It was also effective as measured by a widely used standardized reading test. (RC)

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TITLE: EVALUATION OF THE SECOND-YEAR COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAM

AUTHOR: ROGER O. SCOTT

ABSTRACT

Tests of reading skills were administered to first-grade children using the Second-Year Communication Skills Program. These data are reported in this paper.

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EVALUATION OF THE SECOND-YEAR COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAM

The Second-Year Communication Skills Program (SYCSP) consists of instructional materials and procedures designed to improve the reading skills of first-grade children. A description of the program objectives and materials can be found in other Laboratory documents (Flores and Niedermeyer, 1970; Labeaune and Sullivan, 1969). Data collected during the 1970-1971 tryout of the SYCSP are reported in this paper.

PROCEDURES

Tryout Population

The reading achievement of students was measured in ten classrooms using the SYCSP. These classrooms were located in two Southern California, urban school districts. In one district, sixteen children in each class were randomly selected for testing. Eight children per class were tested in the second district.

Student Tests

The Second-Year Program Test, used to judge effectiveness of the program, was administered to a random sample of children in each of the selected classes. This test measures performance on program words, word elements and word-attack skills. The word-attack evaluation is divided into two sets of items--words practiced in the program and words not seen or practiced in the program but composed of the word elements which were taught. All of the 56 items are of the constructed-response type and one item in each of the above listed categories corresponds to each program unit. The record form for the test is contained in the appendix. This test was individually administered by Laboratory staff at the end of the 1970-1971 school year.

Form 12A of the Cooperative Primary Reading Test was used to provide an additional measure of the children's reading skills. This test consists of 50 selected-response items and is group-administered. National and California norms for first-grade students are available.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Scores on the SYCSP Test indicate that most of the children in the tryout classes attained a large proportion of the reading skills taught during the school year. It can be seen from the data summary presented in Table 1 that there are sizeable differences between the two participating school districts. The differences are particularly noticeable in the low end of the score distributions. Although the distributions for each district are skewed negatively, the degree of skewness is more accentuated in the case of the low scoring group.

TABLE 1

PROGRAM TEST SCORES

	Percentage Correct	
	District 1	District 2
Third Quartile	96.0	95.5
Median	89.0	79.5
First Quartile	73.0	53.5

Table 2 reports mean SYCSP Test scores for each tryout class and the number of units of instruction completed. Class means in six of the ten classrooms are above 81%; in the four other classes the means

are below 67%. Both school districts include high and low scoring classes. The mean scores of each school listed in Table 3, however, clearly show that the children in the classes of one tryout school made much lower scores than the children in the other schools.

TABLE 2

ACHIEVEMENT OF TRYOUT CLASSES

Class	Mean Percentage Correct on Program Test	Mean Number of Units Completed*
1	92.8	12.4
2	90.3	12.4
3	86.6	11.6
4	96.3	11.8
5	83.1	10.9
6	81.9	11.8
7	66.5	8.4
8	64.0	10.5
9	62.7	11.5
10	55.9	12.8

*There are 14 units in the program.

TABLE 3

ACHIEVEMENT OF TRYOUT SCHOOLS

School	Mean Percentage Correct on Program Test	Mean Number of Units Completed
1	87.94	11.63
2	84.96	11.75
3	76.49	11.99
4	62.13	10.54

The reading skills of the tryout children are positively correlated with the number of units taught but the degree of association between these two variables is not extremely high. The rank order correlation between mean class scores and mean number of units completed by the class is +.28. The correlation between the test score of each child and the number of units the child completed is +.41. Only the latter figure is statistically significant ($t=3.95$, $df=77$, $p < .01$).

Additional reading test scores were available for students in one of the two school districts. This district, which had the higher program test scores, provided the Laboratory with data from Form 12A of the Cooperative Primary Reading Test. These data are summarized in Table 4. Also presented are comparable figures from national and California norms. These figures show that the scores of the tryout classes were far above performance levels of typical national and California classes. The median score of the children using the SYCSP corresponds to a national percentile rank of approximately 58. Thirty-seven percent of the 79 children tested were in the top 10% of the national norm distribution. Five percent of the tryout children were in the bottom 10% of the national distribution.

The data collected in this tryout suggest that the Second-Year Communication Skills Program is highly effective as measured by the proportion of program outcomes mastered by most children. It is also effective as measured by a widely used standardized reading test.

TABLE 4

ITEMS CORRECT FOR COOPERATIVE PRIMARY READING TEST--FORM 12A

	Tryout Classes	First-Grade Norms	
		California	National
Third Quartile	39.5	31.2	29.6
Median	33.5	22.4	22.8
First Quartile	25.0	17.6	18.0

REFERENCES

Flores, Cecilia and Niedermeyer, Fred, "1969-1970 classroom tryout of the SWRL Second-Year Communication Skills Program," SWRL Technical Note TN-3-70-4, 1970.

Labeaune, Carol and Sullivan, Howard, J., "1968-1969 classroom tryout of the SWRL Second-Year Communication Skills Program," SWRL Development Memorandum DM 16, 1969.

SICSP POSTTEST: 1970-71
Units 1-14

Name_____ School_____ District_____

Date_____ Teacher_____

Outcome 1: Words		Outcome 2: Word Elements		Outcome 3: Word Attack I**		Outcome 3: Word Attack II***	
"Read this word."		"Say the sound of this (these) letter(s)."		"Read this word."		"Read this word."	
1. cat	+ -	1. t	+ -	1. tin	+ -	1. cap	+ -
2. good	+ -	2. d	+ -	2. pill	+ -	2. deed	+ -
3. jump	+ -	3. k	+ -	3. pulled	+ -	3. fished	+ -
4. apple	+ -	4. ack	+ -	4. sack	+ -	4. lap	+ -
5. green	+ -	5. op	+ -	5. log	+ -	5. mop	+ -
6. bed	+ -	6. est	+ -	6. neck	+ -	6. west	+ -
7. bug	+ -	7. id	+ -	7. duck	+ -	7. lid	+ -
8. six	+ -	8. v	+ -	8. vest	+ -	8. Max	+ -
9. cake	+ -	9. ate	+ -	9. cave	+ -	9. fade	+ -
10. outside	+ -	10. ime	+ -	10. hide	+ -	10. hike	+ -
11. home	+ -	11. ube	+ -	11. bone	+ -	11. role	+ -
12. children	+ -	12. ch	+ -	12. bring	+ -	12. brave	+ -
13. bird	+ -	13. ar	+ -	13. part	+ -	13. shark	+ -
14. story	+ -	14. ort	+ -	14. fort	+ -	14. Mort	+ -
Total Correct ____		Total Correct ____		Total Correct ____		Total Correct ____	

*Item number corresponds to the program unit number from which content was selected.
**These words were practiced by the children in the program during Word Attack instruction.
***These words were not seen or practiced in the program, but are composed of Word Elements taught under Outcome 2.

GRAND TOTAL CORRECT RESPONSES_____

APPENDIX